



## EPA collects air data at 5 schools around Libby

*By Brandon Roberts, The Western News*

Small generators create a buzz in the school halls and the air wheezes as it is sucked into an asbestos monitoring system while students continue their daily school routines.

The Environmental Protection Agency just wrapped up asbestos air monitoring this week in the Libby schools.

Samples were taken over two days at 10 locations – four from the halls, four from classrooms and two from common areas like libraries, lunchrooms and gymnasiums.

Mike Cirian, EPA project manager for Libby, gave the school monitoring update at last week's Community Advisory Group meeting.

Testing sites included Libby Middle School, Plummer School, Libby High School, Central School and Asa Wood Elementary.

The air monitors are placed at heights similar to the children's size group at the schools, Cirian said.

"The data we get from that will be used to set up future sampling and where we are at with the air in the schools," Cirian said.

Results from the monitors should be available in 3-5 weeks.

Former CAG member Clinton Maynard asked if it was activity-based sampling and why it was not done before school started.

In response, Cirian said the monitors are stationary and are not designed as activity-based sampling.

"We want the children in, we want real life data of what's going on in the schools," Cirian said. "We have done and now is a go back and check to see that it is staying protected."

"I am going to call it activity-based sampling," Maynard countered. "We are using the kids to create the environment monitors can do their work."

Libby Schools superintendent Kirby Maki said the timing for the monitoring was appropriate.

"There was noise, a bit distracting in the classroom," Maki said. "But the ultimate good of knowing the air quality outweighs the two-day distraction."

Maki said the monitors were placed where they would be most adequate in determining air quality and hopes to be done on an annual basis so the schools have a record of the data.

In response to a question about whether or not the EPA has plans for activity-based sampling under its definition



Brandon Roberts/TN  
Libby High School's  
monitoring system.

Victor Ketellapper said, "The indoor air monitoring is to evaluate the data we gather this week and based on that not do activity-based sampling in the schools."